

# Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report



**Name of project:**      **Advocacy Groups Network**

**Project Lead:**      **Sarah Pickard**

**Sub Group overseeing project:**      **Chairs Planning**

## **Project Targets from original bid:**

- 30-40 people taking part in 3-4 Speak Out advocacy groups.
- 100 advocacy actions by network groups to give views to sub groups, service managers and other public representatives.
- 6 Big Meeting representing over 130 people.
- Co-chair elections as needed
- 6 to 8 service user groups supported to take part in Big Meetings
- Big Meeting to give views to Partnership Board and/or sub groups in film or report.
- 3 Network News produced by Network participants each year.
- People with complex needs represented at Big Meeting.

## **How the project will do this work:**

- **3 advocacy groups:** supported regular sessions. A 4<sup>th</sup> group will (hopefully) be paid for by another funder.
- **Consultation:** Groups give views on plans for changes to learning disability services.
- **6 Big Meeting each year** (130 people represented): reps from all the groups plus 7 services user group take part.
- **Feedback for each Partnership Board:** film or report after each Big Meeting telling Partnership Board what everyone thinks.



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- **Election of Partnership Board co-chair:** helping candidates understand the job, and prepare an election presentation.



- **Network News:** Support people from the Groups Network to produce 3 each year.



- **Make sure everyone is included:** People with complex needs, autism, and from different cultures.



**How much 2009/10 LDDF money the project gets: £39,000**

**Name of person completing this report:**

**Sarah Pickard**

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**What the project has done in April through July 2009:**

**30 people have taken part in advocacy groups.**

Tuesday and Loud and Clear Groups have worked on a variety of issues such as healthy eating, saying 'no' to people and the difficulty of making complaints. Groups have used a variety of techniques including Forum Theatre, writing and film to explore issues. Other issues include exploring better ways to make form filling more accessible. Findings will be fed into councils 'Communication Forum' in September.

Wednesday Group has offered advice on job description for Travel Buddy coordinator, spoken to Community



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Safety Officer about safety issues, and had a number of contacts with the Theatre Royal to give advice about issues for people with learning disabilities. They also made a film about their feedback. Other work includes visiting a day service to find out more about people with complex needs and making a poster to advertise their group.

All groups have sent reps to the Big Meeting and contributed to articles in Network News.

Work continues in supporting people who brought up issues about lack of choice and how to complain.

**Total number of group actions = 38**

## 2 Big Meetings.

Reps from different 11 groups have attended. Issues include relationships, how to make complaints and finding out more about the Partnership Board. Films made and shown at the Partnership Board.

## Network News

2 Network News produced. Voices of a wider group of people now represented in addition to individual and group articles from Speak Out advocacy groups. Groups outside Speak Out increasingly writing more articles. Groups who have contributed include Care Coops, Avondale, Blue Camel Steering Committee and Albany View. The Words are not Enough article featured work from people with complex needs.



## What the project has done in August to November 2009:

30 people have taken part in advocacy groups.

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The Loud and Clear Group worked on two main issues. The first, working on a film being made to train social workers on supporting people with learning disabilities. Members of the group gave their opinions on the kind of support they would like. The other issue was finding out about changes to day services through meeting with Jacqui Streeter and giving feedback.



The Wednesday Speaking Up Group have been influential in their continued work with the Theatre Royal in increasing the amount of support for people with learning disabilities they offer and spreading the news to people with learning disabilities via network news. A film they made about their experiences of the theatre will be used as a training aid to frontline staff. They have continued their input into the Travel Buddy Scheme. They also promoted advocacy at the Choices Event and wrote about this in Network News.

The Tuesday Group have been speaking up about life experiences and sharing life stories. They invited a cookery worker in to develop their skills and knowledge of cooking. They also gave feedback on a self-directed support poster.

All groups have sent reps to the Big Meeting

A new form has been piloted during this period, helping people to get the support they need around an individual issue. It is hoped that this will support people in the groups and the Big Meeting who find it particularly hard to speak up.

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Total number of group actions = 32

## 3 Big Meetings.

Reps from 12 different groups have attended. September's meeting brought up issues around money and doing things for yourself. Money was followed up in October's meeting for more detailed feedback. At the Xmas meeting people decided on what issues to discuss for 2010. Mathew Hellet and Sheridan Lynch did a presentation on making complaints and the Big Meeting heard about the Big Health Check.

## Network News

1 Network News has been produced that is just being distributed. The Newsletter celebrates recent local events such as the Choices Event and the Oska Bright Film Festival from the perspective of people with learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities will also be made aware of the Together Network.



## What the project has done in December 2009 to March 2010

32 people have taken part in advocacy groups.

The Wednesday group has continued with their work with the Theatre Royal on improving accessibility for people with learning disabilities. They have also met Celia Barlow to find out about plans for the city. They have met with a representative from the bus company to talk about issues people with learning disabilities face on the buses.



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The Loud and Clear group have been doing reminiscence work about places they have lived using Google street as a tool. They have also been talking about their lives and welcoming 2 new members.



Members of the Tuesday Group have been using our new form 'Getting the Help I need'. The form enables group members to follow up actions and issues talked about in groups by giving it to their chosen support staff. They have also worked with the Food Partnership in reviewing some accessible recipes.



Total number of actions 29

## 2 Big Meetings

There have been 2 Big Meetings. Representatives from 11 service user groups have attended these meetings. Issues discussed include work and getting out to see friends and going to places. This has been fed back to the Partnership Board and the Employment Support Team via the Link Group. The Big Meeting have made suggestions for what should be the 3 topics that the Partnership Board talks about this year. One of their main issues is getting a good social life which is now one of the Partnership Board 'Big Issues'.



## Network News

The Spring edition of Network News has been produced and circulated in April. Issues include an overview on



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people's issues about work. These issues fall under 5 of the 13 headings in Valuing Employment Now and will direct the first part of the employment plan in Brighton and Hove.